

# *CRB sets example for other agencies to follow*

**W**hen it comes to technology and transparency, the Key West Citizen Review Board, a volunteer panel that reviews complaints against police officers, is on the cutting edge of such boards across the state and nation. The CRB's recent decision to post all of its documents online elevates it to a much higher level of transparency and public access.

The benefits of essentially going paperless are multiple and dramatic. First, there are cost savings from not having to produce hundreds of pages of documents for each board meeting. Not printing all these documents also has an obvious benefit to our environment.

With all electronic files stored on servers in the Midwest, disaster recovery becomes as simple as a few clicks of the mouse — rather than trying to protect boxes of paper in a fire or hurricane.

The greatest benefits, of course, come from the unprecedented public access of having virtually every document associated with a case available online for anyone to read. Residents interested in ongoing cases previously had to go to the Police Department or CRB offices to review a case file — now any citizen can simply

## Editorial

connect to the Web site (<http://www.keywestcity.com/departments/?fDD=36-0>) and review documents online. (Those who suffer from boredom or sleeping disorders also can find much fascinating reading.)

Since the CRB started posting its documents online, visits to the Web site have doubled. Not surprisingly, citizen comments on cases also have increased, with interested parties leaving notes when they feel a fact has been recorded incorrectly in a report.

In addition to cases, the CRB also has posted much information related to the board. A document of note available on the site is a recent Miami ruling which exempted review boards from the Policeman's Bill of Rights, a ruling with potentially huge ramifications.

Florida has one of the most open governments in the nation, and we should all be proud of this fact. With the technology available today, total public access should be the norm rather than the exception.

We commend the CRB for the forward thinking exhibited by its site, and implore other government and public agencies to follow its lead.

— *The Citizen*